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## Two Emperors Making Up.

We give on another page the letters which were exchanged on September 4 between the Emperors of Germany and China, on the occasion of the visit of Prince Chun to Berlin to convey the regrets and apologies of the Chinese Emperor for the murder of the German Ambassador, Baron von Ketteler.

Such an event has occurred only rarely in the dealings of nations with one another, and always, we believe, under compulsion from the stronger of the parties. This mission of Prince Chun took place under compulsion from the German Emperor. It probably would not have taken place otherwise.

So far as its moral significance is concerned, it might just as well not have taken place. The Chinese government would probably have apologized finally by letter for the murder of the ambassador, and this would have been of more value in the future relations of the two nations than the apology which has been forced virtually at the point of the sword.

The two letters furnish a most interesting study. That of the Chinese Emperor, while sincerely regretful and apologetic, as it ought to have been under the circumstances, exhibits no spirit of cringing and cowardly licking the dust. There is a tone of reserve, dignity and self-respect about it which commands sincere admiration. One cannot read it without feeling between the lines something which the Chinese ruler would have liked to say about what was due to his country from Germany and the rest of Western Europe.

Emperor William's reply is more moderate than one might have expected. It is stern and reproachful, and the German Emperor makes it the occasion of reading a lecture to the Chinese government on the manner in which it is to behave itself in the future. But there is an absence of the crushing and humiliating severity which one had reason to expect would be employed by the Imperial War-lord. The purpose of Emperor William to humble China as greatly as possible by making Prince Chun go through with certain humiliating prostrations before him was given up, greatly to the credit of Germany.

If there were a complete and honorable clearing up of old scores between the two governments, another mission of a very different kind would take place. Emperor William would voluntarily send an envoy of high rank to Peking to apologize to the Chinese Emperor for the seizing of Kiao-Chau, the final act of aggression which brought the Boxer uprising to a head, and to restore the port to its rightful owner. He would further invite all the allied powers to join him in very humble apologies to the Chinese government and people for the cruel and inhuman massacres, the devastation and looting wrought by the allied armies. He would take the lead in all this because the allied forces were commanded by one

of his own generals. The rest of the powers would join him in it, because, though some of the troops were less guilty than others, the governments who participated in the allied expedition all became thereby more or less responsible for the lawless and ghastly deeds which were done.

China's guilt in the matter has been very great, and she ought to have humbled herself and confessed her sins with even more spontaneity and fullness than she has done. But considering their light and their professions, the guilt of the powers, for their conduct before and at the time of the uprising, was equally great, and nothing short of self-humiliation and confession of their wrongs will ever set matters right.

There is, of course, not the remotest probability that Emperor William will do any such thing, or that such a thought will even enter his head, or the heads of the high functionaries of the other governments from whom China has suffered so many exasperating wrongs. But all this only makes the more clear the fact that the governments, even those calling themselves highly Christian and civilized, are yet very far from following in many of their relations to one another even the most elemental principles of common moral conduct and of the Christian faith which they profess.

## The Appeal of the South African Republics to the Hague Court.

We give on another page the text of the Appeal made last month by the plenipotentiaries of the South African Republics to the Administrative Council of the Hague Permanent Court of Arbitration.

The Council has declined to take any action in the case. This course has surprised many persons and led them to the conclusion that the Court is worth nothing after all. But this is a hasty and erroneous conclusion. The Council took the only course possible to it.

The Court, under the convention by which it was established, has no power to take the initiative in bringing any case of controversy before it. Recourse to it is entirely voluntary on the part of disputing nations. They only can take the initiative. One of them acting singly cannot get its case before the Court; the consent of both is required. The Boer republics were not signatories of the Convention; but even if they had been, they could not have secured the services of the Court without the consent of England.

The Appeal shows that the plenipotentiaries did not expect to get the case heard without the consent of England. What they seemed to have hoped was that the Administrative Council, which consists of the ministers accredited to the Netherlands government, would mediate or secure the influence of the governments to try to induce England to submit to arbitration. But this the Council as such could not